CHRISTUS JUDEX

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Alice Curtis,
from Mrs. L. H. Ri

CHRISTUS JUDEX.

A

Traveller's Tale.

BY

EDWARD ROTH.

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NEW YORK:
LEYPOLDT & HOLT.
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TO HIS PUPILS,

Old and Young,

OF BOTH HEMISPHERES,

THE FOLLOWING LITTLE STORY,

SUGGESTED BY THE SIGHT OF A WELL KNOWN WONDER OF NATURE,

IS

Affectionately Dedicated,

By E. R.

Philadelphia, 1864.

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Christus Judex.

CHAPTER I.

THE PICTURE.

Of all the villages which the tourist contemplates with enraptured eye as he descends from the Alps into the plains of Lombardy, Acqua Chiara is certainly not the least beautiful. Its founder, however long ago he lived, must have had a keen eye for the picturesque; for it is located on the precise spot where it not only appears to the best advantage itself, but also commands the most enchanting views afforded by the Lago Dorno. The latter is one of those charming little lakes so common in this country, which, as their basin lies between the sinking spurs of the distant Alps, are long, narrow, and winding in shape, and disclose at every turn some new and unexpected combination of light and shade, water and sky, wood and rock, hamlet, chateau, island, hill, dale, and snowy mountain. However,

it is not my intention to describe the village or its beauties now, but to tell of an incident that befell me there about fifteen years ago, which was of rather a singular character.

The sun was just setting behind the Apennines as, weary and footsore, I entered the village and directed my steps to the first inn that presented itself. Neither the smiling "*Ben arrivato, signor!*" of the bustling host, nor the substantial supper for which I was indebted to my unmistakably outlandish air, nor the merry laughter of a group of young people dancing and singing under a large tree at the other side of the way, having succeeded in arousing me out of a kind of gloominess into which I sometimes cannot help falling, I retired early, in the hope of refreshing my exhausted energies with a good night's rest. In this I was altogether disappointed. I tossed and tumbled about for some hours, but could not fall asleep. At last I arose, dressed, and, tempted by the brilliancy of the moon and the coolness of the night, raised the window, and, my chamber being on the ground-floor, went out. After wandering about for some time, I found myself in front of the village church. The door was not locked; and, yielding to a habit my good grandmother taught me many years ago, I soon found myself saying a few prayers before the altar.

The moonlight streamed brightly in at the windows, rendering every thing around almost as visible

as in the daytime. There was little interior ornament to be seen; but my attention was soon so completely engrossed by one object, that, to gaze at *it*, I disregarded every thing else. Right over the altar was a large painting, containing one single figure. It did not represent the Crucifixion, as is generally the case with such pictures: on the contrary, the figure—of which I could distinctly see only the head—seemed to be sitting. But this head affected me most powerfully. It was the profile of a pale, noble countenance gazing sorrowfully yet immovably on some heart-rending sight. Oh, the sternness of that brow, though the eye was mild and the mouth gentle and loving! And the chin: it was the embodiment of inexorability: it told of strict justice, but no mercy. It might have passed for the face of Brutus superintending the preparations for the execution of his sons. Such a thought, indeed, at first occurred to me; but, of course, it was instantly rejected. Notwithstanding the relentlessness displayed in those features, there was something so surpassingly divine about the whole head, that the humblest peasant needed no informant to tell him that *that* was the beatified countenance of the Lord Christ.

But it was neither the beauty, nor the divine expression, nor the awful sternness, of the countenance that affected me now. In other circumstances, these wonders of art would have possessed their proper charm for my mind. But they were now completely

disregarded in my feelings of the most profound astonishment. *The countenance was as familiar to me as my father's face, and yet I could not tell where I had seen it.* I had never been in the country before; in fact, it was only my second day in Italy. In vain I recalled to my mind the few faces I had thought deserving particular remark during my travels: not one possessed the most distant resemblance to that grand, impressive countenance gazing up there so sorrowfully yet with such awful sternness.

And yet, the longer I contemplated it the more intimately I found myself acquainted with every turn of the outline. That peculiarly shaped brow, straight and towering; that slightly aquiline nose, so suggestive of power and resolution; those lips, forcibly drawn in, as it were to repress or conceal their quivering; that chin, so square, so fixed, so feelingless;—all these I had often gazed on before, often studied with such interest that the very sight of them now forcibly recalled to my mind the various reveries into which I had often fallen whilst beholding them. Those features had sometimes filled my imagination with the idea of a mighty monarch slowly leading his disciplined legions against a tumultuous host of his subjects who had formerly regarded him with reverence and affection, but were now madly arrayed in arms against him, instigated by some fanatical watchword. At other times, every warlike expression would melt away, and the features became

those of a genie, beneficent but submissive to command, who, being appointed by a higher power to superintend some direful punishment, would have willingly declined the task, but is now regretfully preparing for its strict and merciless execution. And at other times, I well recollected, they had seemed to bear the expression which the countenance of one of the giants of old might assume if he now looked out of his grave and saw all traces of his brethren's long sojourn on this earth swept away forever from its surface, and their places filled by a race, active indeed at present and full of life, yet destined, as he well knew,—themselves and their possessions,—to undergo a doom as sweeping, as complete, and as utterly inevitable as that which had befallen their now forgotten predecessors.

These and similar thoughts arising in my mind at the present moment, almost immediately at the sight of this picture, convinced me beyond all doubt that I had seen the face before. Something seen in a dream could not have left such vivid impressions, and no face with which I had not been at least for some time closely acquainted could have excited such a continuous chain of ideas. My father's humble cottage in distant America had contained no picture capable of attracting my attention or exciting my youthful imagination so powerfully; and the splendid masterpieces of the Continent I had merely glanced at, or omitted to notice altogether, reserving

for some future occasion a critical examination of their charms. None of my relations or intimate friends, none of the great men either of my own country or the few whom I had contrived to see in Europe, bore these features.

Whose were they, then? This question I asked in vain. I felt as if in a dream; and the cool night-air that swept over me as I left the church hardly restored me.

Late as it was, the landlord stood at the door on my return.

"I have been to your chapel," said I.

"The signor is fond of praying by moonlight."

"I might have prayed, but——"

"The signor is pale: has he seen a ghost?"

"Not exactly: something nearly as bad."

"Ah! some furious brigand——"

"No: nothing of the kind. Who painted the picture over the altar of your church?"

"The signor has seen our picture?"

"I wish to know who painted that picture, and whom it represents."

"The signor takes uncommon interest in our picture."

"With good reason. I am intimately acquainted with the person that bore those features."

"Basta! The signor has a good memory."

"How long has that picture been there?"

"Exactly one hundred and fifty years come to-morrow."

"One hundred and fifty years! Impossible! The picture over the altar? It is quite new."

"There is but one picture in the church, and that is over the altar,—*Il Cristo Giudicante* ('The Judging Christ'). This day one hundred and fifty years ago it was hung up in the church, and to-morrow we celebrate its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. We are proud of that picture, signor. It was a native of Acqua Chiara that painted it. He is our only great artist, it is true; but he is a *great* one. You can see his tomb to-morrow covered with flowers."

How much farther the voluble *Locandiere*—who evidently took me for a Protestant—may have gone on, I do not now remember; for his extraordinary assertion regarding the hundred and fifty years completely bewildered me. Here was mystery upon mystery. At first, the greatest and most puzzling difficulty is to decide to which of my acquaintances these features belong; but now it appears that they are those of a being not only not in existence at present, but who lived one hundred and fifty years ago. I must be mistaken. I have perhaps been led astray by some imperfect resemblance, and my heated imagination easily supplied what else was wanting. In the present state of my feelings this is not at all unlikely; and to-morrow I shall probably

laugh heartily at my perplexity. Thus I tried to reason with myself for a moment; but the least reflection again showed the improbability of this supposition. The impression made on my mind by these features originally had been too distinct, too deep, to admit the possibility of a mistake now. The moment I saw them, I had recognized them; and, what was more, they had called up the very same train of ideas (from their familiarity I must have been entertaining them for a long time) as I had often fallen into formerly when contemplating the original, somewhere or other, at my leisure. Feverish and restless, I lay awake all that short summer-night, harassing myself in a fruitless attempt to solve these irreconcilable difficulties; and it was not until morning had dawned that I could at last obtain a few hours of undisturbed repose.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCHYARD.

THE cheerful sounds of the Sunday-morning bell soon dispelled my slumbers; and, upon going out of the inn, I found the little village in an unusual state of excitement. The men, young and old, dressed in their tastiest holiday attire, were hastening through the street, their faces bright and beaming, and their looks not without an air of importance. The women, too, evidently took great interest in the *fete*. The Italian maiden, ever graceful in form and spiritual in expression, never looks so well as on Sunday. That sacred day always seems to shed something of its own soothing and sanctifying influence on her, which is inexpressibly charming. On this morning, however, the brilliancy of the new dresses, the profusion of ribbons, flowers, bouquets, and silver pins, and the increased animation so generally perceptible among the female inhabitants of Acqua Chiara, lent them such additional lustre, that I was not at all surprised that many young men found unusual difficulty in getting past certain doors and windows underneath which their path lay.

The cause of all this pleasing bustle soon appeared. On my arrival at the church, I found the entrance all decorated with flowers, and the surrounding graveyard crowded with people, who were decking the graves, old and new, with garlands and roses. To the right, about half-way between the church and the farthest bounds of the graveyard, through the moving crowd, I could distinguish a large, white monument. Upon approaching nearer, I found it was erected in the middle of about two rods square of greensward, which was enclosed within an elegant iron railing. It consisted of two marble pillars, about eight feet high, supporting an arch, and enclosing a bust, underneath which was cut, on a slab, in large, conspicuous letters,—

PIETRO CASOLA
PAINTER OF THE JUDGING CHRIST
NATIVE OF ACQUA CHIARA.
BORN 1655. DIED 1725.
REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

Although, as I was assured by a bystander, the monument was nearly one hundred years old, it looked as if it were erected yesterday; and now, decorated as it was with roses and flowers and wreaths twisted around the pillars, it really presented a very interesting spectacle.

In answer to my further inquiries, my informant brought to my mind a great deal of what Battista

Pientone, my worthy host, had already told me the preceding night, but to which I had paid little attention, from the confusion into which the first part of his intelligence had thrown me. After learning now that it was one of the most inviolable customs of the inhabitants of Acqua Chiara to celebrate every tenth year the installation of the picture, with all the splendor and *eclat* that their humble means afforded,—

"Is '*Il Cristo Giudicante*' his only work?" I asked.

"Signor, yes: his only *great* work. But a few small pieces of his are still in the possession of the neighbors, and a few, I understand, are to be found in the great palace at Florence."

"It is certainly an extraordinary piece of art," said I, earnestly.

"*E mirabilissimo, signor!*" cried my informant, delighted at my fervor.

"But don't you think it looks very fresh?"

"It does look fresh; but I have been for more than fifty years gazing at it, Sunday after Sunday, not to mention the weekdays, when I was troubled in heart from one thing or another, and would come in to look at it and get consolation. For that face is so stern-looking, signor, that a sight of it, reminding us of what we all have to expect, forces us to disregard trifling annoyances. Oh, signor, it is impossible to tell how many quarrels that picture has prevented in our village, and how much good it has

done generally. People coming here, as they do sometimes, from Monti, Chiusa, and even from Milan, have often declared that the sight of that head succeeded in recalling them to a proper sense of their duties to God and man, when every other means had failed. But, as I was saying, I have looked on that face every Sunday for the last fifty years, and often and often besides, and I can assure you that it appears now precisely the same in all respects as when I saw it for the first time. The old men of our village declare that it looked no brighter the first day it was hung up than it does now, and that it seemed as if the love and regard the people here entertain for it keeps it always fresh and bright. Indeed, there is a kind of prophecy among us that denounces terrible woes on the village as soon as that picture begins to look dim; and, though there is no regular authority for this prophecy, for my part I cannot altogether disbelieve it."

"Is it known whose face it represents?"

"Whose face? Whose but the Lord Christ's?"

"You are aware, of course, that all painters have *models*, and——"

"Oh, I understand the signor now. But, though this picture was painted here, no native of this village ever sat for it; indeed, no mortal being ever sat for it. Casola himself often declared that no man ever lived in this world that bore those features."

"Those features never had a real existence?"

"So he often declared. He was absent in a distant country for a long time. On his return—but it is too long a story to tell now; and here comes the Padre, who knows it best: he will, no doubt, be pleased to relate it all to you at the first opportunity."

My renewed astonishment was here interrupted by the arrival of the procession. It was headed by the Padre, dressed in his usual garments; and the little boys and girls that followed him, two by two, instead of candles bore wreaths and flowers in their hands. He stopped at the entrance of the little enclosure, and the children, filing off, one by one, the girls to the right, the boys to the left, outside the railing, continued their march until they met on the opposite side, when the whole line stopped, and remained standing at the distance of about a foot from the railing, which they exactly enclosed.

Then came the old men and matrons of the village,—venerable beings, who perhaps for the last seventy or eighty years had not missed a single one of these joyous commemorations. They also filed off right and left, taking their places behind the children. After these came the young unmarried men, to the number of one hundred, bearing wands waving with ribbons, and wearing pretty breastknots in front of the left shoulder. They filed to the right and left like the others; but, before they had all passed,

the sound of voices in chorus was heard, and presently twelve young men dressed as artists—natives, as I was informed, of the nearest parts of Northern Italy, and at present either painters or painters' pupils—proceeded slowly by, chanting a song which some poet had made long ago in honor of the great Casola.

After the artists, at some distance, came a triumphal car, borne on the shoulders of twelve of the youngest married men. In this chair, under a canopy that represented the starry sky, holding a cross in her hand, was seated a young maiden about twelve years of age, beautiful as a star, and dressed in the purest white. She represented Religion, and was without ornament of any kind except her own radiant beauty. Two young maidens, emblematic of Poetry and Painting, went before her, strewing the path with flowers. Then followed the unmarried village maidens, clad in gay costumes of various colors, crowned with flowers, and singing another song which a poetess had composed in praise of the great painter. Last of all came another maiden, arrayed in white, only a long black veil of the finest texture, falling from her head, floated gracefully over her shoulders almost down to the ground. Personating the gratitude of the inhabitants of Acqua Chiara, she was the most beautiful girl that could be found; and now she bore a large emblematic garland, to the

composition of which every family in the village had contributed its share.

As soon as the leaders of the artists had reached the rails, all separated and halted, forming a line on each side of the path, through which the supporters of the chair, and afterwards the maidens, passed. I should have mentioned that, at the commencement of the ceremony, the Padre, near whom I had chanced to be, seeing that I was a stranger, had courteously beckoned me to his side, so that I had every opportunity of enjoying the scene.

As soon as the triumphal car reached the monument, the supporters turned to the right and let down their burden. In the mean time the maidens still advanced; but they ceased singing as they entered the enclosure, which they nearly filled. It was a moment of universal silence and breathless interest when the veiled maiden approached the monument, knelt before it, and kissed the white marble. Then, with one accord, burst from the lips of the assembled multitude the song always sung on such occasions.

It was a simple air, and the words were artless, not to say unpolished; but it is impossible to describe the effect produced on me by the harmony, heightened as it was by the sight of the numberless faces beaming with love, joy, and gratitude, and many streaming with tears in the enthusiasm of the moment. To translate the *spirit* of the song is

beyond my power: the following, though a feeble, is a pretty literal, translation of the words:—

SONG.

O loved Casola, painter great and good,
Once more before thy treasured shrine we meet;
Again the memory of that day 's renew'd
When first thy fellow-men thy work did greet,—
When, first display'd before their spell-bound eyes,
Its meanings struck them with mysterious dread,
And made them, trembling, almost realize
The awful judgment that awaits the dead.

Its meanings *still* remain in all their force;
Thy gift, O Christian, *still* its office fills;
Still is it found a never-failing source
Of sweet relief for all our human ills;
The very worst we suffer here is naught,
If yet our hearts from sin continue pure:
Ah, who can dare indulge one sinful thought,
And then a glance from that stern face endure?

Then, loved Casola, here, upon thy grave,
Thy happy people meet in gratitude,
To bless and praise the glorious God that gave
Our feeble wills a help so great and good.
And may He grant that thy example bright
Our youth may imitate! and, oh, may He
Preserve thy *work*,—our glory, our delight,—
To bless our latest coming sons in *thee!*

When the strains had died away, the kneeling maiden rose, and, amid another universal hush of silence, advanced to the bust, kissed the lips, and carefully laid the garland on the brow. This, per-

haps, was the moment of the most intense interest on the part of these good people. The old men and young women, I remarked, seemed most affected. The faces of the young men, it struck me, betokened rather pride and joy. Suddenly the bell, bursting into loud peals, summoned us to the church. The veiled maiden withdrew to her chair, where she remained whilst the procession retired slowly and silently, reversing the order of the approach. As the children returned, they met, two and two, before the tomb, and deposited their wreaths on the space before the grave, and, when that was covered, they hung them in festoons on the railing that surrounded the enclosure.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHURCH.

On my entrance into the church, my eyes first naturally sought the "Cristo;" and, now that I could see it more plainly in the daylight, it occurred to me that, while the features appeared exactly as they had the previous night, the expression had become more benign. Of the hard, stony sternness that was so terrifying at first, though it had not entirely vanished, I could hardly now catch a trace. This I imputed to the effect of the blaze of hundreds of tapers that surrounded the altar, softened and mellowed by the many-colored rays of the bright sun streaming in through the old windows of richly-stained glass. But I was afterwards told that the people also noticed this change, and that it had been often before remarked on such a day.

Clouds of incense now began to rise. The organ pealed forth the *Kyrie Eleison*, and mass commenced. I too must have partaken of the general enthusiasm and piety; for on no other occasion, however solemn, before or since, have I felt so deeply moved while present at the holy sacrifice. I was kneeling exactly

opposite the picture, and, as I gazed on it, I felt myself gradually forgetting my familiarity with the features, and slowly imbibing a feeling far more absorbing and profound. As it was surrounded with wax lights, the frame was hidden in the blaze, the background faded away into distance, and the figure seemed to come out so distinctly that it required little imagination to believe it sat there living and breathing. All seemed to share in this impression; for, when the organ ceased, the stillness of death prevailed through the church, though every lip moved in prayer.

Mass went on. The Gloria was chanted, and the Credo. After the oblation, all was again hushed in the most profound silence.

Just then, a low, faint sound was heard from the organ. A silvery voice of surpassing sweetness chimed in, and, as the united sounds gradually rose, they were joined by the other voices of the choir, rolling forth rich volumes of delicious harmony. The words, which could be plainly distinguished, were those of a Latin hymn, which was neither rhyming nor metrical, but, like the Te Deum, consisting of detached sentences. The music was thus more expressive. Unbound by the regular rises and cadences, it rose or fell, sunk or swelled, according to the meaning of the sentiment. It was in complete harmony with all that I had witnessed in that strange church; for, though of a profoundly melan-

choly character, it contained occasional passages so beautiful and touching that one could easily suppose them to be uttered by a chorus of angels, as, rapt in awe, they witnessed the accomplishment of one of the tremendous mysteries of the *Eternal.* The words were simple, and to the following effect:—

HYMN.

Before the world was made, and the stars, was the Lord Christ;
Rejoicing in the bosom of His Eternal Father;
And their Divine Love filled limitless space.
And countless ages rolled away.
At last Man was created, but by sin he disobeyed his Creator.
And because Man had offended against Omnipotent Justice, it grieved the Lord Christ.
For the Lord Christ loved Man as the apple of his eye.
And the Lord Christ became Man, and died to save us from Omnipotent Justice.
And He opened us the road to our home in Heaven.
And He still assists us on the way thither.
For the mercy of the Lord Christ is inconceivably great.
And He shall continue to assist us as long as the world endures.
But woe to the man that forgets the love of the Lord Christ,
Or disregards His guidance, or despises His admonitions.
On the Last Day shall all be made manifest.
Then shall Mercy be suspended, and Justice alone shall prevail.
Then shall His countenance be like a stone.
Against the terrors of that dreadful day enable thy servants to provide, O pious Lord!
Grant us the grace to imitate Thy example,
And to follow Thy guidance, and to practise Thy admonitions,
That we may dwell with Thee for eternity;
For we are the children of Thy Father.

Towards the middle of the hymn, the music—of which an indescribable grandeur and solemnity had been the chief characteristic—gradually became strongly expressive of terror. It impressed the listener, in spite of himself, with a sense of mortal awe and undefined fear. He felt an icy thrill in his heart, as if in presence of a spirit. Upon me this feeling grew stronger and stronger, until the choir came to the words, "*His countenance shall be like a stone*," when a flash of terror shot through me; for a glance at the "Cristo" now showed the countenance transfigured indeed and divine, but hard and pitiless as a flinty rock. This idea, of course, could only be attributed to the excited state of my feelings; but the writer and the composer of the hymn had fully understood the conception of the painter.

But I will not detail much further my recollections of the proceedings of that mass, however interesting they may be to me, or deeply impressed as they are on my memory. I will not dwell on the points of the moving discourse the Padre pronounced on the occasion, or on his joy at recognizing the countenances of many who had been present at the previous celebration, or his touching allusions to the absence of others, *then* so conspicuous, but *now* passed away forever, or his hearty welcome to the strangers that honored their festivity, or his warm earnestness when depicting the indebtedness of the village to their great painter, or his passionate admo-

nitions to the young artists then present to turn their glorious gifts to good account, like Casola, to promote the happiness and virtue of their brethren, and not to imitate too many others who make their heaven-born art a slave to their vanity, if not an instrument for their destruction. "For *that* is real glory," cried the good priest,—"*that* is genuine fame. *That* is why we love and bless our own Casola. He is still among us: he is not dead. *His* great heart has indeed ceased to beat; but through his great work he still makes *ours* throb in our bosoms. His tongue is silent; but through his great work he is still as eloquent as Solomon. His arm has become ashes; but through his work he still takes the poor man consolingly by the hand and guides him to that bright home where poverty and suffering have an end. Through his work he is, and has been for one hundred and fifty years, loving us, protecting us, instructing us, and consoling us. And here his labors do not end. He will do the same for our descendants: they too will find him a benefactor. And let us confidently trust that in the future times, when all recollection of *our* short existence shall have vanished from the earth, when our children's children, to the fifth generation, shall have passed away, that even then the inhabitants of Acqua Chiara shall honor his memory, celebrate his festival, and bless his name as sincerely, as fervently, and as enthusiastically as we do now."

Mass proceeded and ended. Never before had I even imagined the existence of such pious enthusiasm as I had witnessed on that day. Never before had the paramount object of man's existence in this world been so powerfully brought home to my conviction. And yet the first feelings of surprise with which I had regarded the picture remained as vivid as ever. The question I asked myself oftenest on my departure from the church was, "Where *had* I seen that face?" The long and careful examination I had given it in the full light of day had only further convinced me, if that were possible, that I had often and often gazed on it before. Yet it was painted by a man who lived one hundred and fifty years ago. Nay, had I not been told that the features were not those of a human being at all? And this last assertion, though, of course, too evidently the offspring of ignorance or of extraordinary exaggeration to be believed, was still quite bewildering in its tendency. In a word, I was as much mystified as ever; but I was resolved to make every effort to solve the problem before leaving Acqua Chiara.

Returning to the inn, I was overtaken by a boy, who said that the Padre would be pleased to see me at his house. The invitation, as may be supposed, was readily accepted. Nothing could exceed the cordiality of my reception by the good Padre.

"At first sight," said he, "I knew you were an American; but the respectful interest you took in

our little proceedings convinced me you were also a Christian." (Only Catholics are called Christians in Italy.)

"All your proceedings, sir," I replied, "possessed much attraction for me. The emotion of the people was quite affecting."

"Yes: the poor people love Casola sincerely. I never have to stir them up on *that* point. On the contrary, I fear," he added, smiling, "they sometimes think him quite as good a saint as any that has his name on the calendar."

"That is not surprising, Father: it is a magnificent picture. But that countenance, Father,—where did Casola see the original? or is it a creation of his fancy?"

"It is no creation of his fancy."

"It *is* the face of a man, then. Who was he? Where did he live?"

"No man that ever lived bore that countenance."

"It was not painted from a human countenance! It is not a creation of his imagination! Yet it is an original painting! You speak in riddles, Father."

"Yet in perfect truth, my son."

"Listen, Father. Yesterday, for the first time in my life, I set foot in your village; yet I have often seen that countenance before."

"Even that is not impossible; though you are the first man I ever heard make such an assertion."

"I see," he rejoined, as I was ready to break

forth into a torrent of questions,—"I see that it is no ordinary curiosity you entertain about the matter; but I have no time to satisfy it now, as I have still many things to attend to. I will be happy to explain every thing to your satisfaction this evening, if you will honor my table with your presence. Casola's story is rather singular; but I have been hearing it from my childhood, and I know the most remarkable incidents of his life. Besides, a friend of the great artist, to whom he had bequeathed his papers, wrote a 'Life of Casola,' with a view towards publication, which, for some reason, never was published. This manuscript I have in my possession; and I think you will find it quite satisfactory on many points. I have never been in your great country; but what I have seen in this manuscript makes me regard it with redoubled interest. Excuse me now: I must attend to Vespers. *Addio!*"

From the particulars which the Padre so courteously imparted that evening, as well as from the full and often circumstantial account which I myself read out of the manuscript, I contrived, on my return to the inn, whilst the chief details were still fresh in my memory, to write out the following history of Casola.

CHAPTER IV.

CASOLA'S APPRENTICESHIP.

GIOVANNI CASOLA possessed an independent fortune in Acqua Chiara, where his well-known prudence and kindness of disposition had gained him universal good will. He was approaching his fortieth year when he married Beatrice Caracci. She was a native of Bologna, and a member of that wonderful family that had given to the world so many great painters. Pietro was their only child. From his earliest years he had given decided proofs of his talents for painting, and several portraits of his friends are still preserved which he took before he reached his twelfth year. His mother, who had much of the genius belonging to her family, was delighted at these efforts, and encouraged him to persevere in his course. Her greatest wish was to see him an artist; but, as she was a woman of exceeding piety and benevolence, she wished him to devote his talents to religious subjects only. "How noble," she sometimes exclaimed, in her conversations with her son, "how divine, is the inspired artist's calling when he renders back to Heaven the Heaven-

bestowed gift! What magic influence he exercises over the souls of his fellow-beings! Who can view Raphael's Transfiguration without being thrilled with almost the same awful happiness as the real visible presence of the Redeemer would inspire? Contemplate the entranced countenance of Guido's Madonna in Florence, and you will soon commence to pray. Many have felt their angry passions soothed down and their souls filled with calm resignation at the sight of the sweet figures of Carlo Dolce. Even before the St. Mark of Fra Bartolomeo, as in the presence of a superior being, it is impossible to stand without feeling one's self filled with grand and ennobling thoughts. Oh, my son, fame has great charms for mortals; but, if thou hast genius, let it be thy aim rather to inspire men with just reflections regarding *their own condition* than with admiration for *thy great works*. After death, the breath of man, expended in censure or approbation, will be of little consequence to thee; but even the angels cannot enjoy a greater delight than their consciousness of having helped one poor soul on its way home to the bosom of its Creator. Pietro, the day I saw you paint a worthy picture, I would feel that the worldly object of my existence was accomplished. I would bless God and die."

"Mother," exclaimed Pietro, one day, after hearing her utter such sentiments with more than usual

warmth,—"mother, what picture shall I paint? How can I benefit men?"

"Keep them in mind of the end of this life: that is as much as mortal may attempt. Paint Christ coming to judge the world."

"*Rex tremendæ majestatis!*" cried the boy, as in ecstasy. "I will do it. Let *that* be the great object of my life. From this moment, to the accomplishment of that task I devote every faculty of my soul. Mother, let me begin!"

Through his mother's influence he was sent to Bologna. The most famous school in all Italy was held there at that time by Cignani. Casola, naturally of a highly spiritual temperament, and now entirely full of his noble project, surrendered himself with intense delight to the study of all those splendid creations of art by which he was surrounded. His master's talents were so highly esteemed that he had been ennobled by the title of Count; but his commissions for the execution of pictures had been so numerous as to prevent him from taking the steps necessary to attain the highest degrees of excellence; otherwise it was thought he would have rivalled Correggio or even Raphael. Casola became his favorite pupil; and, when Cignani removed to Forli, to paint the cupola of the church of the Madonna del Fuoco, he accompanied him, and occasionally wrought under his eye, for several years, at that great work.

During this time, the promise he had made his mother was ever uppermost in his mind. Enthusiastically bent on its successful accomplishment, he devoted every moment to the study of the principles of art as he could trace them in the works of the great masters. His opportunities were abundant. From the works of his venerable master alone he obtained deep glimpses into the mysteries of art. In the Farnese hall of the Palace in Bologna, where Cignani had executed his famous historical frescoes, the young painter found enough for a long time to satisfy his craving after the beautiful and the grand. But Bologna, besides being one of the oldest cities in Italy, was one of the most renowned for the cultivation of the arts. It contained pictures more than five hundred years old. Many of the most famous productions of the Italian mind, both in painting and sculpture, were collected there. The Venetian, Florentine, and Roman schools were fully represented, and the great Bolognese masters—from Guido da Bologna down to Domenichino—had enriched it with their grandest efforts. It was, however, to the works of Titian, Guido, Correggio, and more especially to those of the Caracci, that Casola particularly devoted his attention.

In the midst of all these treasures, his creative power was soon developed. When he was only fourteen years of age, he painted into a picture of his master's, that represented the Infant Christ

among his companions, the figure of a child so beautiful and angelic, that Cignani, upon seeing it, burst into tears of admiration, and at once saluted him as one destined to become a master of Italian art. On another occasion he painted a small Œdipus Coloneus, in which the desolation of the old king was so forcibly expressed, and the style of the antique so rigidly imitated, that many found difficulty in believing it not to be a genuine Grecian relic. Still he pursued his studies, patiently, hopefully, and devotedly, until he had reached his twenty-third year, when, regarding his preparatory course as nearly finished, he began to think it was time to make a commencement of his promised work.

CHAPTER V.

FAILURE.

The many attempts which he had heretofore made in that respect had been extremely unsatisfactory. His mind, though naturally of a serious and rather gloomy cast, found little difficulty in producing pleasant, even mirthful, images; and forms of grace and beauty grew almost spontaneously beneath his pencil. But the grand, the solemn, the sublime, had ever eluded his most vigorous searchings. In vain did he study and restudy the most precious specimens of the antique. Ancient art, he felt, contained nothing that approached the embodiment of a Christian's idea of a God of *Justice*. He left the antiques, and studied human countenances exclusively, but with no better success. Among them all he could find no model to assist him in portraying the tremendous idea that had taken possession of his soul, but which he was conscious he could never represent without such aid.

He went to Florence; but all the splendors of ancient and modern art collected in that famous city, though they served to exalt still higher his con-

ceptions of ideal grandeur, did not furnish him with the assistance he required. He went to Rome, to visit, among other objects, Michael Angelo's wonderful work in the Sistine chapel, which he had often heard described in terms of rapturous admiration. But even the "*Last Judgment*"—the grandest effort in painting ever accomplished by man—did not satisfy him. He felt that the countenance of the Omnipotent Judge, as represented there, did not realize *his* idea of the terrific grandeur which shall emanate from the face of the *Divine* REDRESSER on the awful day when his Justice is to be made manifest to all men.* Successive journeys to Naples, Venice, Mantua, Genoa, and Sienna, did not advance him nearer to the object of his desires. Remembering that Leonardo da Vinci, when painting his "Last Supper," had been for a long time in the same difficulty as himself, not being able to find an ideal for his Christ, he went to Milan, and visited the Refectory of the Dominicans of Santa Maria delle Grazie, where the picture was to be seen, to try how far he had succeeded at last. He was awe-struck at the sublime calmness and conscious omnipotence displayed in the Saviour's countenance; but, of course, it was altogether devoid of that terror-

* In the manuscript were many criticisms on the merits of the various collections of sculpture and painting seen by Casola in his travels, which I have not deemed it necessary to transcribe.

inspiring expression that should belong to the avenging Judge.* His sharp eye also easily discovered that the head was left unfinished, as if the great master had given up the task in despair. Greatly discouraged, but still fully resolved to persevere, Casola was hesitating as to his next step, when a letter from his mother, announcing his father's rather sudden death, brought him back to Acqua Chiara. He found his mother in deep distress; but he exerted himself, like an affectionate son, to calm her sorrow and console her for her loss.

Some weeks after they had discharged their melancholy duties towards the departed beloved one, and when the keenest pangs of grief were over, their conversation one day turned on the subject of the picture. Casola related all his difficulties, and again repeated an account of the means he had taken to overcome them. He had thoroughly studied the most magnificent of the ancient statues and basso-relievos, the grandest works of the modern great masters, and the most appropriate living models that he could find; yet, after all, he had not met any thing to assist him to present in visible form the idea of the Judging Christ, which still lay clear and distinct in his own mind. After he had done speaking, he observed that his mother continued to look

* It is perhaps needless to inform the reader that at the time of Casola's visit the "Last Supper" was still in a good state of preservation.

at him for some time in silence and with a thoughtful air, as if reflecting more on what his words had suggested than on what they had actually conveyed. At last she exclaimed, fervently, "Glory to the Divine Goodness! Even the most trifling act done in its holy name it never allows to pass unnoticed. It is not a year since I was told that a stranger, a priest, on his way to Rome, had been suddenly taken ill at the inn here, and that little hopes were entertained of his recovery. I went to see him immediately, and found him quite insensible and almost dead. He was a very old man, and his constitution, which evidently had been once of extraordinary vigor, was now completely broken. The physician said that with proper treatment and some stimulants he might yet be restored to consciousness and some strength, but he despaired of prolonging his life. In consequence of our incessant attention, in effect, he was able to converse in a few days, and then we learned that he was a French Jesuit, named De Seranne, who had spent the greater part of his life in the wildernesses of America. Upon his recall a few months previous, he had returned to Europe, and had been the bearer of important documents, some of which had caused great excitement in Paris as soon as their contents were known. They told of the discovery of that mighty river upon whose banks the French king intends to found a great Western empire. He had also brought letters to

different parts of Germany and Switzerland; and it was to the effects of a terrible snow-storm which he had encountered when leaving the latter country that he ascribed his late sudden attack. He wrote a letter to Rome, but he was dead before the arrival of his friends. He preserved his senses to the last moment, and on the morning before his death he conversed with me calmly and cheerfully. I spoke about you and the great object you had in view in cultivating your profession so earnestly. When I spoke of the subject of your picture, he became quite animated. 'Ah!' he exclaimed, 'I often wished that I only were a painter. I have seen a countenance such as might belong to a Judging Christ. In the dark wildernesses of America is a face which one cannot look at without shuddering,—tranquil, majestic, divine, but terrible! Let your son look on *that* face, and then paint a Judging Christ.' I thought his expressions singular; but I did not deem it prudent just then to question him any further. They seemed prompted by the sudden recollection of some exciting incidents of his life among the savages, and the recital might exhaust his remaining strength."

"Did he say no more?" cried Casola, who had listened with breathless interest to his mother's narration.

"Only a few words expressive of his emotions

when he heard an account of the mysterious face from the Indians for the first time."

"But what was its nature?"

"That he did not state. He saw it in the deserts of America; and, as far as I could understand, I think it is there still."

"That is enough. Mother, my resolution is taken. I will start for America."

"Pietro, I cannot oppose you. I see the finger of Providence in it all. I may not see you again for many years; but I feel convinced that I shall see you and your picture before I die. My desire to see it, and my conscious conviction that I shall see it, will keep me alive until your return. Go, my son; and, when you are among the deserts and waters of that wild world, remember that a mother's lips are imploring God for your protection and the accomplishment of your pious enterprise!"

"Mother, I feel like a new man. I share your confidence in my success. I am not to die in America. My bones are to rest beside yours, mother, in our own churchyard, where my father sleeps."

Casola departed with the intention of returning in five years, if alive, although on that point he seems to have entertained few apprehensions. He did not go directly to America, but first visited Spain, where he saw Murillo, in the midst of his great works in Seville. His journal of these travels, in many places copied fully and literally into the manuscript, was

full of details regarding this visit, which, however, are not necessary to be given here. Many of the portraits which Murillo painted, of the proud nobles and melancholy beauties of the Spanish nation, Casola greatly admired. He considered them to have fully embodied the chivalrous yet grave spirit of a land teeming with the grandest legends of romance, and full of the most glorious as well as the most mournful records of history.

He visited Paris, where Le Brun, then at the height of his popularity and enjoying the most flattering attentions of his sovereign, was generally regarded as the great monarch of art in France. His pictures, illustrating the life of Alexander the Great, Casola considered full of genius; but the work at which he was then engaged—a series of paintings for the gallery at Versailles, representing the exploits of Louis the Fourteenth—in his opinion were not likely to answer the public expectations.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW WORLD.

At last, on the 2d of May, 1680, he embarked at Rochelle for the New World. His voyage was very favorable; and, before the month was ended, his companions on board the "La Fleur," though they still could see nothing but a boundless waste of waters, were told that they were in the mouth of the St. Lawrence. As they proceeded up that noble stream, the low and desolate coast became gradually more visible. Flat, sandy hills and monotonous eminences bounded the view for a long time. No grass or shrubs could be seen. Like a man of great abilities to do good, which he does not choose to exert, so, Casola thought, the St. Lawrence here flowed sullenly and silently through a dreary desert, without affording it the means to nourish a single tree, but, in return, without receiving from its bosom a single tributary stream. Another day's sail, however, completely changed the scene, and henceforward the voyagers were incessant in their expressions of surprise, joy, and admiration at the scenes of beauty and endless magnificence that every turn disclosed

to their view. Untrodden forests descending down the long slopes, even to the water's edge, or crowning the towering cliffs; picturesque islands reposing in calm beauty on the surface of the river, still many miles wide; broad black portals, between which mighty streams poured in their deep, silent waters; furious torrents, descending from the upper country and tumbling down the rocky banks in sheets of foam:—these, the more striking features of the scenery, surrounded by lofty mountains whose peaks were visible in all directions, filled Casola with a painter's enthusiasm as he gazed on them with a painter's eye. "Glorious land!" he exclaimed; "what boundless treasures do thy vast rivers presage! If the toiling European only saw the riches thou art so lavish in displaying, dearly as he loves the home of his fathers, precious as he holds its memories, how soon would he abandon all, to dwell with thee and share thy birthright of freedom and abundance!"

Early in June the travellers landed at Quebec, the chief settlement in Canada; and Casola lost no time in calling on the Rev. Father Francis de la Valle, bishop of the diocese. In answer to his inquiries regarding the parts of the country in which Father de Seranne had been stationed, he learned that his missionary labors had been very widely extended. Many years ago, in company with Father Dreuillettes, he had penetrated into the Indian country that lay away

far in the south towards the English settlements. From that country, in which he had been very successful, he was afterwards removed; and, Father Dreuillettes having died, the Indians of that place—the Abenakis, as they were called—were now under the spiritual care of Father Simon, who had established a mission on the Kennebeck River. Father de Seranne had been afterwards for a long time among the Iroquois and Hurons, and had spent several years in the region of the great lakes, in an unavailing attempt to ascertain the mysterious fate of Father René Mesnard, the first missionary that had ventured to penetrate the limitless tracts that lay in the remote West. As to the face which he had spoken of with so much emphasis, the good bishop had never heard of it, and what was thereby meant he could not even conjecture. Regarding its probable locality, of course, he could not furnish the slightest information himself; but he would refer Casola to a man who, if any one could be, was perfectly competent to give him every necessary information on the subject, or, if that was impossible, would put him on the most assured way to procure it.

This man's name was Jacques Clérêt; and Casola soon saw that the bishop's expressions in his favor had not exaggerated his merits. Since his arrival in the country, Jacques had led a wild, wandering, restless life,—exploring, hunting, trading, making

incursions into the English and Dutch settlements, and often joining in the more numerous expeditions against the hostile and wily Iroquois. He had accompanied Marquette in his famous voyage down the Mississippi, and had been one of his attendants when that pious hero expired so tranquilly on the shores of the Algonquin Lake. He would have formed one of La Salle's party, at that time engaged in the farther exploration of the Mississippi; but at the time of their departure he was unable to move, owing to the effects of a wound received in the leg from the rifle of a prowling Iroquois, whom, however, he had contrived to capture and slay. He knew the Algonquin language, and was intimately acquainted with every variety of forest life.

Casola confessed to himself that, if mortal means were of any avail to assist him in his search, Jacques Clérêt was the best instrument for his purpose. Accordingly, he stated at once the object of his long voyage, and the grounds upon which he founded his hopes of success. He detailed the exact words of De Seranne, as well as he could remember them from his mother's relation, and asked Jacques what he considered to be the meaning of the priest's expressions. Jacques listened to the whole story with great attention, occasionally surveying Casola with glances expressive of much interest. When the latter had finished, Jacques replied,—

"I knew Father de Seranne very well. Eighteen

years ago he rescued me when on the point of being tortured to death by a party of Onondagas into whose power I had unluckily fallen. I went in his company as far as Lake Champlain, when I separated from him and returned home by the Iroquois River. He crossed the lake with the intention of paying a visit to the Abenakis, among whom he had previously dwelt, but whom he had been obliged to leave, in order to inquire into the probable fate of Father Mesnard. It was from this unsuccessful search that he was returning when he rescued me."

"Did he converse much with you?" asked Casola.

"Yes," replied Jacques. "I was the only Frenchman besides himself in the company; the rest were Indian converts. But our conversation was principally about his late expedition. I remember his also regretting that the savage nature of the Mohawks had been so much stimulated by the Dutch of New Netherlands, and that the life of a missionary was no longer safe among the most docile of the Five Nations. In order to secure themselves the monopoly of the fur-trade, they had supplied the natives with rum, taught them the use of fire-arms, and instigated them against the missionaries as against so many sorcerers."

"Have you ever seen him since?" was Casola's next question.

"No," replied Clérêt. "After that time I dwelt

principally in the Huron country, till about ten years ago, when I settled in Fort Cataraqui (now called Fort Frontenac, from our present Governor), and there I remained until I started for the Mississippi along with Father Marquette."

"Could De Seranne have alluded to any thing he had seen in the Western country?"

"It is likely," replied Jacques, "that, if he had seen any thing of that nature out there, I would have heard of it. Long before I saw the mighty waterfall, I had known every one of its features by description."

"What waterfall?" asked Casola.

"The falls of the Unghiara," said Jacques. "You see that broad stream before you,—the St. Lawrence. At the great falls, almost every drop contained in that river plunges down a precipice five hundred feet deep and a mile across."*

"Great Heavens! how grand!" cried Casola, in ecstasy at the idea.

"Wait till you see them," said Jacques. "If you do not regard the risk of being scalped by the Mohawks, we will go and see them before you return to your own country."

"I will sketch them," cried the painter.

"You will hardly succeed," said Jacques. "All

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* This pardonable exaggeration as to the height of the Falls was generally prevalent long after Jacques's time.

the grandeur proceeds from the vastness of the scene and the never-ending resistless motion. These you can never present on canvas. Even the accompaniments are sublime. I can never tell how I felt at the first distant sight I caught of the clouds of spray swelling up into the sky like the smoke of a burning forest."

After a few moments lost in thought, Casola roused himself, saying,—

"But, time enough for that. We were speaking of Father de Seranne."

"True," said Jacques. "I do not think he could have seen any thing like what you allude to in the Western country without my having heard of it. And yet, on our voyage down the Mississippi, on the day before we came to the mouth of the great river Pekitanoui (Missouri), I remember having seen great wonders of which we had never been told. On the face of high, steep rocks, far beyond the reach of human hands, we distinctly saw the figures of two dreadful monsters, of red, green, and blue colors, which upon a nearer approach we perceived were merely painted. The Indians who had directed us as to the course we were to pursue knew nothing of them; and we could not conceive how a painter could be got there skilful enough to execute them, or even how he could possibly have ascended the rock upon which he had painted them."

"Were they skilfully executed?" demanded Casola.

"With great skill," replied Jacques; "and Father Marquette was as much surprised as any of us. However, we were then at least one hundred leagues distant from the nations that lived along the Algonquin Lake, and it is not surprising that they had not given us any information respecting them. But Father de Seranne had never been so far away as that. I have been in every part of the country in which he lived, except among the Abenakis."

"Have you been told of curiosities not so remarkable in their appearance as the Falls?" asked Casola.

"Yes; of many a one," was Jacques's reply. "For example, I do not know how often I have been told of the wonderful shapes presented by the great rocks on the southern shores of the Upper Lake. I can hardly doubt that what Father de Seranne has seen must be among the Abenakis: at all events, let us try *them* first."

"From all I can understand," observed Casola, "the difficulties of my search are only commencing now. But how can I think of asking you to share them?"

"Do not ask such a question," answered Jacques. "You have interested me exceedingly. I am very curious to see the end of your expedition. Besides, you cannot do without me. A stranger can scarcely travel fifty yards here without a guide."

"But, then, the danger, the remuneration——"

"As for the danger," said Jacques, "our ways of regarding things are quite different. I have been a forester for nearly twenty years. An unfortunate incident, to which it is not now necessary to make further allusion, drove me over here in my nineteenth year, when Montagny was Governor. A few years afterwards, the object of my affections followed me, and I led a happy life for nearly ten years, when, on my return from a profitable fur-expedition, I found that during my absence a party of Mohawks had invaded Quebec by night, burned many houses, and murdered many women and children. My wife and child were among the number; and from that day to this, danger has had no terrors for me. As to remuneration, thanks to my experience in the fur-trade, I am now a rich man. Regarding the trouble, the truth is, since I have missed La Salle's expedition to the Mississippi, and as war has ceased, or appeared to cease, I have nothing particular to do, and I feel the time hanging very heavily on my hands. Indeed, I had almost formed the resolution of spending the remaining few years of my life in the Jesuit Seminary as a Lay Brother. So, no more objections. I will only be too happy to accompany you. Let me make all the preparations. We will start to-morrow."

CHAPTER VII.

THE JOURNEY.

THE unexpected difficulties which Casola encountered in his journey seem to have prevented him from being very full in his details. Though his geographical observations are generally accurate enough, yet his description of scenery is sometimes rather vague, and it is not always easy to recognize the exact spot on the route to which allusion is made. In recording his impressions of American scenery, he relied mainly on his pencil, his written remarks being mostly confined to the more prominent features.

Early on the following morning, Casola was called upon by Jacques, who told him that, every thing being now ready for their departure, longer delay was unnecessary. Delighted at this despatch, he was ready in a few minutes to start on his exciting expedition. Descending the steep slopes of Cape Diamond until he came to the river, he found there two birch canoes in charge of the four Abenaki Indians who were to be their guides. Complete preparations had indeed been made, short as the time

had been, and Casola beheld with surprise and pleasure the stores of provisions, the blankets, and other facilities for encampment, with which, besides six long guns, the birches were supplied. Jacques presented Casola with a pair of pistols, a long hunting-knife, and a gun, which the latter found no difficulty afterwards in carrying through the woods, as his painting-apparatus was confined to some pasteboard and pencils. Jacques, Casola, and an Indian took one boat, the remaining three Indians the other, and all pushed quickly up the stream. The Indians were tall, muscular men, almost entirely naked, and with what seemed to Casola a singularly wild and savage expression of countenance.

He said as much to Jacques.

"Oh," said the latter, "the Abenakis, though very brave warriors when once aroused, are of a comparatively mild and peaceful disposition. They belong to the Algonquin tribe, and they are women when compared to the Iroquois. The Iroquois are the most cruel and vindictive of all the Indians. Before we return, you will have opportunities enough to verify this."

"Does our road lie near the lands of the Iroquois?" asked Casola.

"No," replied Jacques; "but we shall probably have to return that way. The Indians tell me that the most direct road to their country, though in some places very difficult, is not tedious. This road, which

lies almost due south, we will follow; for, as we do not know how long our search is to last, our object at present is to be sparing of time. The other route, by which the Abenaki country is entered from the west, we may probably follow on our return to Quebec. Though it is longer, it is altogether free from those high mountains which, like those on our present route, in winter are covered with snow, and are extremely difficult, if not quite impossible, to cross."

"How far is it to the Abenaki country?"

"More than a hundred leagues."

"It will not take us till winter to travel a hundred leagues."

"The Indians tell me we shall be often quite satisfied if we make a league a day."

Thus conversing, they paddled up the St. Lawrence. They soon crossed the stream, and, entering the mouth of a large river flowing into it from the south, which Jacques called the Chaudière, they ascended its course for many days. On the first day, Casola enjoyed a sight of much grandeur. After several hours' sailing on smooth waters overhung by trees of gigantic growth, the silence of the forest was broken by a sound as of the rising wind. This gradually increased in distinctness, until he could easily recognize the roar of falling waters; the current over which they sailed grew more and more

turbid, when a sudden turn revealed the magnificent cause.

Over the edge of a rocky wall one hundred and fifty feet in perpendicular height, the impetuous Chaudière precipitated its foaming waters. The line of the edge was broken by huge beetling rocks which divided the torrent into three distinct falls, that were, however, again united long before they reached the boiling gulf. Black, craggy precipices lined the sides of the white cataract, whilst far above, on each side of the rushing flood, the eternal forest reposed in motionless serenity. It was a picture perfect in all its details.

Casola could not restrain his transport.

"Yes," said Jacques, "they are very grand. They are not, indeed, half as high as the falls on the St. Charles, nor in vastness of proportion can they be at all compared to the sea that plunges down at Unghiara; but they are more complete than either. Here we are shut out from every other view. With nothing but water beneath, forest around, and sky above us, these falling waters impress us with all their charms. Nothing extraneous breaks in to mar the effect. I like to be here: nowhere else do I feel more calm. I have often been here before; but at every fresh visit I still find a new charm."

Casola looked at Jacques, as he spoke, with a thoughtful expression, but continued silent. But now they had to land and carry their boats, pro

visions, guns, and camp-equipage through the woods for about half a mile to the navigable waters above. This they could do with the greater ease as the boats were of such light construction that an Indian found no difficulty in carrying one altogether on his own shoulders. These boats excited Casola's surprise by their great effectiveness notwithstanding the simplicity of their construction. They consisted of a slight but strong framework, long and narrow in shape, and a covering of bark taken whole from the birch-tree. They were impervious to water except where it oozed in through the joinings, and rocks did them little harm. Casola often saw them shooting down rapids with perfect safety, where boats of less frail material would infallibly have been swamped.

Their journey at first was very pleasant and easy. During the day their birches glided swiftly up the smooth stream, and at night, moored to some projecting tree and strewed with furs and blankets, they proved luxurious beds. The trout and other savory fish, which the Indians speared with marvellous ease, imparted an agreeable relish to the coarse but palatable provisions, of which they had laid in a plentiful supply at Quebec. The profound stillness and savage grandeur of the wilderness that enclosed the waters over which they sailed, appear to have made a deep impression on Casola. His imagination delighted to plunge into the mysterious

depths of those dark forests, where so many countless generations of leaves had mouldered away in silence, never displaced by the foot of man.

Obstacles to their progress, however, soon began to appear. Sometimes they came to a part of the river where, from a contraction of the rocky banks, the current flowed with such impetuosity that it was impossible to stem it. Sometimes, after a sail of many hours on smooth water, they came in sight of a sloping ledge of rocks in the river's bed, over which the furious waters rushed, whirling and boiling and covered with foam. The labor through which they had to go until they could discover navigable water began by degrees also to become extremely difficult. The forest generally extended to the water's edge, and the growth of underwood was often so thick that, in order to pass at all, the travellers sometimes found it necessary to spend a whole day in cutting themselves a path with their axes.

Their route, which had hitherto been in a valley, now began to ascend. Swifter and swifter became the course of the stream, and the rapids grew so frequent that at last the Indians pronounced the river no longer practicable. The birches being now useless, Casola expected to see them abandoned; but he was told that, as soon as the highlands separating the tributaries of the St. Lawrence from those of the ocean were crossed, they would again become

indispensable. Their progress for several days after this was very slow. The route lay among dense woods, through which they had continually to cut their way. The path was often so steep that the feet of one traveller were on a level with the head of his successor. Nor were they without company in these gloomy solitudes. Sometimes a sudden rattle told them of the dangerous neighborhood of a deadly snake, which, however, was perhaps as much frightened as themselves. Sometimes a wild cat would cross their path with stealthy footsteps. Often they were startled by the angry howl of the wolf; and occasionally the surly bear would be seen for a moment surveying the intruders with no welcoming glance, and then disappearing in the recesses of the dark wood.

As they ascended higher, the cold became severe and their labor seemed endless. Snow lay deep in many places, and thus increased the other difficulties of the journey. Over frosts, snows, rocks, and decayed timber they had now to make their way; and, as Casola could not see the least sign of a road, and the sun was often wholly concealed by the dark clouds, he could not help admiring the unerring certainty with which the Indians went forward. They never turned to the right or left, nor even paused to ascertain their further course. This confidence, Jacques said, was owing to certain observations they had made regarding which side of the trees the moss

grew on, and also the direction taken by some of the branches. Jacques was a very cheerful companion. He not only seemed to disregard the labor himself, but succeeded in making his companion likewise forget it. He evidently had conceived a great affection for Casola, which he showed by a multitude of kind attentions. He cooked his meals, chose the best place around the fire for him to lie at nights, spoke about his mother and the picture, told him all kinds of Indian legends and wild adventures of his own among the savages, helped him with his stout arm when the way was more than ordinarily rough, and, if his spirits were gloomy, brightened them up with the recital of jests and merry tales, and often trolled out, with a good voice, some gay song learned long ago in "la belle France." This last means was always effectual in cheering up Casola, who, besides possessing a fine voice and a good ear, was very fond of music. When Jacques burst out into some merry lay, Casola would pick up the air at once, join his friend in the chorus, or make verses himself, as the case might be; and thus they would sing and sing, to the manifest delight of the Indians, until the old forests rang again. Casola, however, remarked that, twice or three times during the journey, Jacques himself became silent and gloomy, as if he were a prey to mournful recollections. On such occasions he made every exertion to arouse his friend, and he was always successful.

They soon began to descend; but the stream whose course they now followed was as yet of no further importance than to show them the way. They had heretofore travelled almost directly south; but Casola now remarked that their course lay nearly due east. Lofty mountains towered on each side; and, as the travellers wound down the deep gorges of these highlands, Casola was never weary of admiring the great ocean of forest that lay before him, spread out in all directions. One day he was assured by one of the Indians that the faint white streak, which he could scarcely detect on the verge of the horizon, was the great sea that separated him from his own country. After nearly a whole day's toil in descending the mountains, the stream becoming comparatively smooth and deep, they could once more launch their canoes on its waters. But this was only a momentary relief; for they soon landed on its southern bank, and, taking up the boats, once more plunged directly into the forest. Here Casola thought he could detect a kind of path that led south; yet he felt this to be one of the worst spots on the whole journey. The undergrowth was dense and luxuriant, the ground was soft, and in many places so swampy that they often found it necessary to fell a tree in order to make a bridge over the broad pools of black, slimy ooze. This difficult march, however, was not of long duration. Ere the last faint trace of daylight had

altogether disappeared before the mild rays of the full moon, now rising bright and cloudless in the eastern sky, the travellers found themselves on the northern shores of a great lake, the Indian name for which, though Casola heard it, he did not remember. Here they rested for the night; and, while some commenced preparing the boats for the morning's journey, others busied themselves in getting ready the evening meal. A most welcome addition was made to their feast through the skill of Jacques. His keen eye had caught sight of a fine moose that was descending to the lake-shore to drink, and his unerring bullet laid low the antlered monarch of the forest. Casola was surprised at the size of the animal. Its body he considered as big as a horse's, and much larger than that of any stag he had ever seen in Europe. The flesh was tender and savory, but he thought it more resembled beef than venison.

The greater part of next day was spent on the lake, though the Indians drove their boats forward with great rapidity, as the waters were smooth and deep. Here again Casola took occasion to admire the wild grandeur of the ever-changing scenery. Now the canoes swept round rocky cliffs, now they wound through the countless islands, and now they emerged into the sparkling waters, where the lake expanded so widely that every sign of the shore was altogether lost on one side. At other times their course was so hemmed in on all sides by the gloomy

forest, that outlet in any direction seemed impossible. Oh, the grandeur of that dark, impenetrable forest,—silent forest, where no song of birds ever broke the brooding stillness,—opaque forest, shutting out, like a prison-wall, the view in all directions except on the northwest, where the whole background was filled up with lofty mountains, whose dim, faint summits hardly formed a line on the bright azure!

Towards evening they reached the southern extremity of the lake, from the west side of which they saw its waters issue forth in a broad stream, deep and rapid. Into this they immediately entered; and, following its course, except where falls or violent rapids intervened, they found themselves by the close of the next day approaching the little Indian town of Norrigevocque.*

* The route of Arnold's famous expedition through the same wilderness, made nearly a century later, seems to have been more obstructed than this of Casola's, and to have deviated little less from a straight line.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INDIAN VILLAGE.

This settlement was situated on the Kennebeck River, at that point where, meeting a smaller stream from the south, it turned off at right angles to the east. The huts—of which the general plan was a frame of poles meeting above and covered with bark—were scattered here and there without any attempt at regularity. High above them all towered the little chapel, of more artful construction and ornamented with a belfry. Just as they were entering the borders of the village, the bell rang out, sweet and loud, the evening call to the "*Ave Maria.*" The sounds were so unexpected, the very idea of the gentle prayer, commemorative of the Incarnation, ascending to heaven out of the depths of that wild forest, was in itself so startling, that for an instant Casola could hardly help thinking that his ears were deceived. But the sight of Jacques and the Indians piously bending whilst they repeated the prayer, assured him of the reality of the sounds that now died away sweetly on the evening air.

They were welcomed with much joy by the

Indians. Jacques and Casola had one of the best lodges of the village assigned to their use, and their companions, who, though they belonged to the same tribe, were entire strangers there, were treated with every hospitality. They soon learned that they had come too late to see Father Simon. A few days before, he had set out to visit another settlement of Indians on the banks of a great river farther east, and the period of his return was quite uncertain. Somewhat disconcerted at this intelligence, Jacques, at whose instigation Casola had undertaken the present long and toilsome journey, proposed that they should start next morning for the eastern settlement; for, without some new information obtained from Father Simon's own lips, he thought they could proceed no farther. However, having conversed for a long time with some of the oldest Indians of the village in their own language, he learned enough to change his determination; and, appearing next morning before Casola with a joyful countenance, he said that so far every thing had been quite successful, and that the object of their expedition was likely to be accomplished very soon. To Casola's most eager inquiries he would give no further information, unwilling to excite too highly expectations which after all might be disappointed, but told him that, after a few days' rest, they would resume their journey.

To Casola this resting-time passed very quickly.

He spent it in observing the various phases of Indian life, which he contemplated with much interest. He saw much to admire. His European ideas of savage life had led him to expect quite a different scene. In a village containing several hundred inhabitants he found perfect order and discipline prevailing. There was no court, prison, or punishment of any kind. All—from the oldest sagamore to the youngest infant that tumbled about before the huts—lived in perfect freedom, and yet the rights of others were scrupulously respected. The clearings around the village produced abundance of maize, turnsols, pompions, and other vegetables; for since the arrival of the Jesuits among them their knowledge of agriculture had been greatly extended. Whilst the men fought their enemies, or went on hunting-expeditions, killing wild animals for their fur or their flesh, the women attended to the domestic affairs, cultivated the ground, reaped the corn, and underwent the most laborious employments, with perfect good will and apparent happiness; for Casola always saw them laughing, bustling busily about, and talking with great loquacity. The men, on the contrary, he considered very grave and silent in their deportment. Unless when engaged in their sterner occupations, he saw them lead an indolent—perhaps a tiresome—life. It was only what he expected to hear, when he was told that, notwithstanding all Father Simon's instructions, their hearts still panted

for war. Of the peace which they had concluded with the English several years before, on terms very honorable to themselves, they were now heartily weary. Several acts of the late war still rankled in their bosoms; their enemies provoked them daily by new acts of invasion and injustice; and Casola saw that few years could elapse before hostilities would burst out anew with greater animosity than ever.

Still, he was delighted to see the fervor with which they performed their religious exercises. Three times a day almost all the inhabitants of the village proceeded to the little chapel, where, in the absence of Father Simon, prayers were said and instructions given by a venerable chieftain who had been one of the earliest converts to Christianity. The same patriarch took care of the little school, which the children attended regularly every day. Their apprehensions being naturally quick, the progress they had made in their humble studies, though they wanted many of the most indispensable articles of civilized school-rooms, was quite enough to surprise Casola. This he ascertained by personal examination; for most of the young pupils had acquired some knowledge of the French language. When he told them the name of his country, one little fellow, sketching a rude map of Italy on the floor, and making a large dot in the middle, to represent Rome, asked him if he knew what *that* was, and if he had

often seen their Holy Father. Their love for Father Simon approached veneration. They always spoke of him with the utmost affection and respect; and their eyes glistened with tears at the idea of his return. They were merry, lively creatures, inoffensive, if not courteous, in their conduct, easily amused, and they hardly ever quarrelled. They soon formed an intimacy with Jacques, who told them wonderful stories in their own language; but a few pencil-portraits of the elders, and some groups of the children at their amusements, in which the features of each were easily recognized, rendered Casola immediately the object of universal regard and admiration.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DISCOVERY.

But it was now time to resume their journey. As the return of Father Simon might not occur for several months, Jacques and Casola had to depart without seeing him, being desirous to bring their expedition to a conclusion before the cold weather should set in. On the morning of their departure, the Indians, young and old, crowded round them, testifying much affection; and six young men of the village insisted on being allowed to accompany them, besides the two that had been already appointed for that purpose. They followed the course of the river already spoken of as having entered the Kennebeck on the south, and ascended its waters for nearly twenty miles. Now, for the first time, Casola began to trace distinctly the outlines of a towering range of mountains, which were so whitish in their appearance that he had hitherto considered them vast piles of mist. He was informed by one of his new companions, named Toxas, that they were called the "White Foreheads," and considered to be the homes of mighty spirits, and that his course lay directly at

their base. When they came to a part of the river where it turned to the north, they left it, and, shouldering their boats, plunged into the woods and followed a southerly direction for a few hours. After a portage, which was not very difficult, they came to the banks of a river much larger, deeper, and more rapid than the one they had left. Up this new stream — called by the Indians "*Amariscoggine*" — they now ascended, their course being almost due west; and they soon found themselves encircled by lofty mountains. Still they followed up the rocky channel, where the stream was sometimes deep and smooth, often narrow, rapid, and precipitous, for two days, until they came at last to a sudden bend where this river likewise wheeled off to the north. Leaving it, and concealing their boats in the windings of the rocky banks, they waded for some distance up the waters of a small rivulet, when a sudden clearing away of the thick forest revealed to Casola a view of the grandest mountain-scenery he had witnessed since his arrival in the country.

A vast valley, at least twenty miles long, and of varying breadth, lay stretched between two ranges of mountains, which rose tall, dark, and frowning on each side. On the right, in particular, he remarked three peaks, which could not be less than a mile in perpendicular height; and behind, soaring far above them in silent majesty, rose the bald dome of another mountain,—the king of his companions,—his white

summit scarcely distinguishable from the fleecy clouds that sailed round it in the bright sky. High up their sides climbed the dark forest in densest masses, except where interrupted by white streaks, which he was told were vast spots, miles in width, bare and sterile, marking the track of the thundering avalanche that had been plunged down by some sudden loosening of the rocky surface, with resistless might, from the precipitous cliffs above. These were the "White Foreheads;" and on the other side lay the object of their long search. But, according to the Indians, no one could ascend these mountains and live. Christianity had by no means removed the ideas of fear and reverence with which they had been always regarded. They were, they said, the abodes of powerful spirits, the masters of thunder, lightning, storms, and rain, who often fought and made these summits their battle-grounds. These were the appropriate theatres for the dread encounters of those jealous spirits; for in that region the clouds could dash together, the winds roar, the lightnings flash, and the thunders rattle with all their fury, without one sound of the mighty conflict ever reaching mortal ear. Some daring hunters, having presumed to pursue moose-deer that had retired up these mountains for refuge, had never returned, and their fate was never known.

The travellers continued to pursue their southerly course on foot through the valley, ascending by one

stream, descending by another, until, meeting a third that flowed from the west, they pursued it up towards its source. It led them into defiles that wound round the base of the great ridge; but they soon got so completely entangled in this mountain-circle that Casola saw no possibility of an escape from his position except by climbing those dreaded dizzy heights. But the ridge that lies before them is thousands of feet high, and so steep that it is perhaps impossible to climb it. Still he sees the Indians pursue their way without apprehension. They ascend the stream with perfect confidence. He follows them; and, after struggling for some hours through the dense forest, a sudden opening of the woods affords him a glimpse of a magnificent spectacle.

Rising to thousands of feet on each side, he beholds the walls of an enormous cleft in the mountain, extending from summit to base, as if the mighty ridge had first split asunder and then wheeled apart, like folding-doors, in order to allow him a passage. He even fancied that if these precipitous cliffs were to roll together once more, his eye could detect the precise spots where the corresponding projections and cavities would exactly meet. This valley was at first about a quarter of a mile wide, the stream still making its way through the rocks that encumbered its bottom; but, as the travellers ascended, it gradually became narrower, until at last the walls were hardly twenty feet apart, although

they still rose high and perpendicular. The millions of workmen, thought Casola, that had erected the Pyramids, were they to labor at it for a hundred years, could not cut so perfect a road through the heart of those mighty mountains.

Thus escaping from their giant prison, they journeyed onwards, and soon struck on a wild river, which the Indians called the "Amonousuque," flowing westerly in a rapid stream. This they followed with much difficulty; for the valley through which it flowed was very narrow, and the forest as dense as ever. At last, leaving it and ascending higher ground, they saw the summits of the "White Foreheads," now many miles behind them, reflecting the last rays of the setting sun, whilst a heavy shadow lay on the intervening forest. Here they encamped for the night, weary of their wilderness-journey, but in better spirits than ever; for next day was to fulfil the promise of their Indian friends.

Resuming their journey early next morning, they proceeded directly south; and, upon approaching another mountain-chain, they were admitted into its interior by an entrance of the same magnificent and wonderful character as that by which they had lately made their egress. As before, it seemed as if these frowning mountains, like mighty sliding portals, had been drawn aside to afford the travellers an entrance to the wonders that lay concealed within.

Now that Casola was drawing near the end of his

journey, when the object of his hopes and fears was almost within his grasp, he felt himself becoming all at once uneasy and anxious. What if it proved a mere chimera, after all? Might it not be some pious but weak fancy of good Father de Seranne, or the childish object of some Indian superstition? Rapidly as the decisive moment approached, he often wished it were over and the suspense under which he labored ended. But no such thoughts found place in Jacques's breast. He even confessed that in the feelings of awe and reverence with which the Indians approached the spot he himself fully shared.

On they hurried now with accelerated footsteps in the dark forest, through whose dense foliage they occasionally discerned the wooded cliffs and grim precipices that overhung their path. On still they hurried, until, coming to a little lake, Casola and Jacques halted on its shores, in obedience to a signal of the Indians, who continued to advance along its left bank. When they had gone about half-way, the leader, Toxas, stopped, turned round, looked over the lake, and then, raising his left arm, nodded to his white companions to look in the direction which he indicated. Breathless with expectation, they hurried up, gave one glance, and Casola, with a cry, acknowledged that his wish was at last attained.

From the other side of the little lake rose a moun-

tain, steep and dark, and clothed with forest nearly to its summit. On the right the ridge sloped away gradually, and its outline was soon lost with its neighbors; but on the left the bare rock rose out of the dark forest, five hundred feet high, and perpendicular as a wall. More than half-way up this wall, and extending nearly to the top, Casola saw the features of a vast face, calm and stern in aspect, sharply defined against the blue sky. The forehead, nose, lips, and chin were evidently immense blocks of stone; but they were so disposed and fitted to each other as to form the outline of a human countenance, not only perfectly correct in all its proportions, but revealing a sternness and majesty of expression that completely enchanted him. There, on the summit of a mountain, among the clouds as it were, fully a mile distant, hung the portrait, the august features of which had so long haunted his imagination, waking and sleeping, as those of the Divine Judge, but which he had heretofore been so unsuccessful in his endeavors to represent. For a long time he continued to gaze on it with intense rapture.

Jacques also looked at the wonderful Face with feelings of indescribable awe, and listened with the liveliest interest to the Indians as they recorded the various changes of expression it had assumed in the course of ages. Formerly, said they, before the white man made his appearance, it seemed happy,

and looked with benign and gracious aspect out over the wild forests where the aborigines chased the deer and slew the savage bear. At certain times every year, the little lake was the rendezvous where deputies from various parts of the country—even from the distant Western lakes—met, bringing presents to testify their gratitude to the great "*Onon-manito*," or "*mountain-spirit*," for the produce of their land, the success of the chase, or the increasing prosperity, in general, of each tribe.

But in progress of time the old men remarked, with disquietude, that the Face began to lose its joyful expression, and to assume an appearance of grief, which they feared omened some unspeakable misfortune that was to befall the nation. Full of alarm, they had sought to propitiate it with prayers and sacrifices and new treaties of peace (for they might have offended it by their frequent wars); but, to their utter consternation, they saw it becoming every year more and more stern and inexorable in its lineaments, though it still preserved that mournful expression which had excited their alarm at first. "And ever since," added Toxas, gloomily, "it is becoming sterner and more relentless; and our oldest sages affirm that, notwithstanding the efforts made by the good French *Black-robes* to introduce Christianity among us, this continued change only forebodes the utter annihilation of the Indian race

and name, and that the day of our doom is fast approaching."

Whilst the Indians thus related the sad presentiments inspired by the wonderful Face, Casola was taking his sketch, though, as he afterwards told Jacques, that was a needless operation; for the majestic outlines of those features had engraved themselves imperishably on the tablets of his memory forever.

* * * * *

The manuscript life did not conclude here. It contained a description of Casola's visits to the Falls and the great Lakes, and some singular adventures that befell him there. It also detailed some surprising incidents in Jacques's life, which united the friends more closely together, and induced Jacques to return to Europe with Casola, at whose house in Acqua Chiara he spent the rest of his days. It told how Casola found his mother still living, how he painted his great picture, which she had the happiness to see and to enjoy many a year before her death. But it was the next day that I learned all these additional circumstances. As soon as my curiosity respecting the origin of the picture was gratified, I preferred spending the remainder of the night in writing out the principal points in the strange story thus related, and indulging in the revery to which they naturally led. Of course, long before I came to the catastrophe, I had known what it was

to be. An early familiarity with the famous New Hampshire Mountains permitted no uncertainty on that point, and enabled me to acknowledge the general correctness of Casola's statements; making due allowance, of course, for all the difficulties under which he had labored. His other adventures in America may perhaps furnish matter for a future paper.

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